

Preventing Bullying Policy



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School Context: Mackworth House School is an independent special school for pupils aged 6-19 with autism. We are an inclusive school that has the specialist knowledge, skills and understanding to meet the needs of children with autism and associated learning disabilities.

We believe that Mackworth House School is unique in its approach to working with children and young people with autism, where the staff, pupils and their families work together to make ensure that time at Mackworth House School is a happy one. The curriculum is personalised so children feel safe, supported and cared for and so can engage in activities that are meaningful and enjoyable. Communication, positive behaviour support, sensory support needs and the environment is at the forefront of everything we do, so children are able to learn, progress and develop.

This policy recognises and interprets our responsibility for the well-being of our staff, pupils, guests, visitors, the local community and outside agencies. The Preventing Bullying Policy should be read alongside our Supporting Appropriate and Positive Behaviour Policy. This policy has regard to the following documents and legislation:

- Department for Education. *Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies* Crown Copyright, 2017
- Department for Education. *Equality Act 2012: Advice for School Leaders, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Local Authorities*
- Department for Education. *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. Crown Copyright (2017, Chapter 1)
- Department for Education. *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. Crown Copyright (2016)
- Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Children and Families Act (2014) part 3
- Public Order 1986
- The Communications Act 2003
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1998
- The Education Act 2011

Rationale

Mackworth House School recognises that the behaviour of some of our students may have an impact on other people, events or objects. Our aim is to support pupils to gain an understanding of their behaviours and emotions and how to cope in a variety of situations and contexts while building up relationships and practising social interactions. If our students possess the knowledge and understanding of bullying and the effect their behaviours may have on others then we would expect them to follow the rules of our preventing bullying policy, and we would support students through the process if necessary.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to be supported to learn different ways of behaving and coping.

Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts other individuals or groups either physically or emotionally. It might be motivated by actual or perceived differences between children and young people and can take many forms.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional:** Being unfriendly, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)

- **Excluding:** deliberately excluding people from friendship groups with bad intent
- **Physical:** Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Verbal:** Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, graffiti, gestures, discrimination against age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnicity, sex and sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- **Sexual:** Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic:** Because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- **Cyber:** All areas of internet ,such as email and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls and misuse of associated technology , i.e. camera and video facilities

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police.¹ If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

Safeguarding children and young people

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, the school staff should discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action. Full details can be found in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

However, external support can be given to pupils whether or not it is deemed a child protection concern. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying. Full details can be found in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and Chapter 1 of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be

a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

Bullying which occurs outside school premises

School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Objectives of this Policy

- Pupils learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus
- Develop a sense of caring and respect for one another.
- Build caring and co-operative relationships.
- Support pupils to understand what appropriate and positive behaviour is.
- Make it easy for pupils to report bullying where they are able and make sure they feel assured they will be listened to. For students who are not able to express their feelings, particular attention should be paid to:
 - Mood
 - Engagement
 - Behaviour
 - Body Language
 - Enjoyment
 - Attention
 - Relationship changes
- The Headteacher, Curriculum Managers, Teaching Assistants and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- The Headteacher, Curriculum Managers, Teaching Assistants and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Intervention

Mackworth House School has the responsibility to support children who are being bullied. The nature of the support will depend on individual need and the circumstances. This can include support from external agencies such as counselling, Common Assessment Framework or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

It is also important to consider the motivations behind the bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

Vulnerable pupils

Bullying can happen to all children and young people and it can affect their social, mental and emotional health. School staff should support all pupils who are bullied. This means being alert to the effect any form of bullying can have and being especially alert to where it may have a severe impact. There is evidence to suggest that pupils that are badly bullied in school are more likely to be bullied out of school, for instance either on their way to or from school or through cyberbullying.

Some pupils are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. For example those with special educational needs or disabilities, those who are adopted, those who are suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to experience bullying because of difference. Children in care that are frequently on the move may also be vulnerable because they are always the newcomer.

These young people are often the same young people who might need greater support to deal with the impact of bullying, for example those who are going through a personal or family crisis. In addition children with special educational needs or disabilities can often lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents so it is important that staff are alert to the potential bullying this group faces and that their mechanisms for reporting are accessible to all.

There will also be a range of other local or individual factors that result in some children being more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others. Being aware of this will help schools to develop strategies to prevent bullying from happening. It will also help schools be alert to those children who may be severely affected when it does occur.

The impact of bullying can be severe because of the nature and extent of the bullying or because it is combined with other factors such as those mentioned above that also affect the social, mental and emotional health of the pupil.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice

While bullied children will not be routinely considered as requiring SEN support, schools and where appropriate local authorities should provide support in a proportionate and tailored way to meet individual needs. The relevant statutory guidance, the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, sets out how developing a graduated response to the varying levels of SEN among children and young people is the best way to offer support. Some bullied children will have SEN.

Promoting Appropriate and Positive Behaviour

- The Mackworth House School curriculum prioritises the need to support children in the development of skills for building relationships, respect and working appropriately and positively with others.
- Each child and young person will have a personalised behaviour management plan which will be reviewed regularly throughout the year.
- Each child will be supported to develop effective, consistent but progressive communication methods which will be reviewed regularly throughout the year to be able to express themselves, understand and be understood
- All staff will be trained on and understand the principles and purpose of the school's preventing bullying policy, its legal responsibilities, how to resolve problems and where to seek support.
- Work with the wider community and other agencies to tackle bullying and promote appropriate and positive behaviour.
- Create an inclusive and safe environment.
- Celebrate success.
- Where possible, staff to talk to pupils about issues of difference
- The preventing bullying policy is monitored on a day to day basis by the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher will respond within ten days to any request from a parent or carer to investigate incidents of bullying.
- The preventing bullying policy is reviewed annually.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to a Curriculum Manager, Teaching Assistant or Headteacher.
2. Records will be kept as part of each pupil's behaviour support plan and will be discussed at regular reviews carried out throughout the year.
3. In serious cases the student's parents / carers may be informed and may be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the adaptations that need to be made to the behaviour support plan and the strategies needed to implement the changes.
4. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
5. Students will be fully supported in recognising and understanding the reasons behind their behaviours, and the impact it may be having on others
6. The preventing bullying policy is monitored on a day to day basis by the Headteacher.
7. The Headteacher will respond within ten days to any request from a parent or carer to investigate incidents of bullying.
8. The preventing bullying policy is reviewed annually.